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Security Council

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Letter dated 28 February 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the conclusions of the European Union General Affairs Council on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, issued on 27 February 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Per **Norström**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

01-27791 (E) 080301 080301

Annex to the letter dated 28 February 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Sweden to the United Nations

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Conclusions of the European Union General Affairs Council on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, issued on 27 February 2001

The Council discussed the developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Council noted with satisfaction the solemn commitments made by the parties, in Lusaka on 15 February and in New York on 21 and 22 February, to relaunch the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, which constitutes the consensual basis for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. It calls on all parties concerned to take immediate measures to permit the disengagement and orderly withdrawal of their troops, in accordance with the Lusaka Agreement and the Kampala and Harare Agreements, and in conformity with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Council welcomed the adoption of resolution 1341 (2001) approving the updated concept of operations for MONUC, and underlines the crucial importance of a rapid deployment of MONUC to verify and supervise the disengagement of troops, in the perspective of a complete, definitive and unconditional withdrawal of foreign troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the ultimate objective of restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Council confirmed the European Union's continued political and material support for MONUC. The European Union will consider how it can give concrete support to the United Nations force and to its contributors.

The Council reiterated the importance of an early start to the national dialogue, as foreseen in the Lusaka Agreement. It welcomed the acceptance by President Kabila of the facilitator, President Masire, as well as the invitation issued by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the facilitator to visit Kinshasa. The Council welcomed the role of President Bongo in the process. It recalled that the European Union and its member States have given support to the process of national dialogue, and reiterated the European Union's readiness to continue to support its institutional framework.

The Council underlined the importance of disarming armed groups that operate in or from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It welcomed the provisions in Security Council resolution 1341 (2001) urging the parties to the conflict to cooperate with MONUC in the elaboration of a plan for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all armed groups referred to in annex A, chapter 9.1, of the Lusaka Agreement. The European Union is willing to work with the international community, in particular the United Nations specialized agencies, on the modalities of such a programme. It mandated the European Union's Special Representative to engage in a reflection on how to pursue this question. The Council reiterated its request that all parties cooperate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

The Council welcomed the expressed intention of the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi to pursue their discussions, which may facilitate the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as in Burundi.

The Council underlined the seriousness of the humanitarian situation, and took note of the latest report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which estimates that more than 4 million people are directly affected by the conflict, including the number of internally displaced persons now estimated to be over 2 million and rising, half of whom have no access to humanitarian assistance. The Council urged all parties to guarantee secure, rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, and stated the European Union's readiness to increase its effort on humanitarian aid, and where possible consider more forward-looking aid. The Council welcomed the efforts made by the Commission of the European Union.

The Council expressed its deep concern at the continuing serious human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and noted the latest report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It reminded the Governments concerned of their responsibility and accountability for upholding the respect for human rights by their own armed forces as well as by the armed forces under their de facto control.

The Council expressed its dismay at the continued recruitment and use of child soldiers in the conflict. It urged all parties to bring this practice to an immediate end, and welcomed the request in Security Council resolution 1341 (2001) to mandate the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict to pursue this objective on a priority basis.

The Council welcomed the fact that, in addition to its stated commitment to the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made announcements concerning economic reforms. If these are followed by concrete action, the European Union is willing to engage in substantive discussion with the Democratic Republic of the Congo on a gradual resumption of development cooperation. In this context the Council welcomes the contact made by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the international financial institutions and underlines the central role of these with regard to the economic reform of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Council will consider appropriate measures which could be imposed if parties fail to honour their commitments under the Lusaka Agreement and relevant Security Council resolutions.